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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS IMMEDIATE 1559

UNCLAS STATE 132961

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [TS](#)  
SUBJECT: FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM A/S WELCH TO TUNISIAN  
PRESIDENT BEN ALI

¶1. Please deliver the following message from NEA Assistant Secretary David Welch to Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali at an appropriate time. The State Department does not plan to release the text of the message but has no objection if the Government of Tunisia wishes to do so. There will be no signed original.

¶2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

After a long and rewarding career with the Foreign Service, I will retire from the U.S. government on December 19. It has been a pleasure to work with you, sir.

I was honored by your hospitality during Secretary Rice,s visit to Tunis this year. Tunisia is one of the oldest friends of the United States, and has proven its graciousness and commitment to this mutual friendship between our two governments and peoples. I have greatly appreciated your views and support on regional issues, including Tunisia,s participation in the Middle East Peace Process and support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It is my sincere hope that you and the people of Tunisia experience health, happiness, and prosperity, now and in the years ahead.

With respect,  
Sincerely,  
David Welch

END TEXT.  
RICE